

CHAPTER 2  
VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATIONS, ACCEPTABILITY,  
REGISTRATION DATES, AND EFFECTIVE DATES

[Prior to 3/21/90, see Voter Registration Commission[845], Ch 2]

**821—2.1(48A) Required elements.**

**2.1(1)** In addition to the spaces required by Iowa Code section 48A.11, every voter registration form shall include room for the county commissioner to make notations indicating such items as the date the form was received, the precinct and school district of the registrant, any other special district or note deemed necessary or appropriate by the commissioner, and the date the registration is effective. The notations may be on the reverse of the form.

**2.1(2)** Voter registration forms that may be used to register by mail shall also include the following elements required by Title III, Section 303 of the Help America Vote Act of 2002, Public Law 107-252, 42 U.S.C. 15483.

*a.* The applicant's Iowa driver's license number (if the applicant has a driver's license) or, if the applicant does not have a driver's license, an Iowa department of transportation-issued nonoperator's identification card number, or the last four digits of the applicant's social security number.

*b.* The question "Are you a citizen of the United State of America?" and boxes for the applicant to check to indicate whether the applicant is or is not a citizen of the United States.

*c.* The question "Will you be 18 years of age on or before election day?" and boxes for the applicant to check to indicate whether the applicant will be 18 years of age or older on election day.

*d.* The statement, "If you checked 'no' in response to either question, do not complete this form."

*e.* The following statement: "If you submit this form by mail and you are registering to vote for the first time in this county, enclose a copy of one of the following documents:

"(1) Current and valid photo identification card showing your name.

"(2) Current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck or other government document showing your name and address.

"You do not need to send any of the documents listed above if you include your Iowa driver's license number, Iowa department of transportation-issued nonoperator's identification card number, or the last four digits of your social security number, and this information can be verified."

**821—2.2(48A) Agency code.** In addition to the spaces and statements required to be included on registration forms by Iowa Code section 48A.11 and rule 2.1(48A), registration forms used by voter registration agencies shall contain a code, to be devised by the registrar, indicating the type of agency. The agency type code shall be on a perforated stub attached to the registration form.

**821—2.3(48A) Federal mail-in application.** Rules 2.1(48A) and 2.2(48A) do not apply to the mail voter registration form prescribed by the federal election commission, which shall be accepted in accordance with Iowa Code section 48A.12 and shall not be used by voter registration agencies.

**821—2.4(48A) Paperless (electronic) registration forms.** Any voter registration agency and the office of driver services, department of transportation, may devise a system of collecting registration applications without using paper forms, in accordance with the following restrictions:

**2.4(1)** All information required to be disclosed on a voter registration form shall be collected by the agency and captured electronically. The applicant shall also be asked to disclose the optional information solicited by the form if that information is not captured as a part of the agency's own record-making process.

**2.4(2)** The applicant shall be shown a list of the eligibility requirements for registering to vote and the penalties for falsely registering, printed in large, easy-to-read type, and shall be advised to read them.

**2.4(3)** The application to register to vote and the signature of the applicant shall be recorded in digitized form in the agency's computer system and shall be kept permanently by the agency. The system shall ensure that neither the application form nor the signature, once captured, can be edited.

**2.4(4)** The agency shall develop procedures so that the digitized signature can be retrieved and reproduced on paper. Within three working days of receipt of an order from a state or federal court, the agency shall provide a reproduction of the requested application and signature.

**2.4(5)** The agency shall transmit electronic registration records to the registrar in accordance with 821—Chapter 8.

**821—2.5(48A) Acquisition of registration forms.** To ensure that forms used by the various voter registration agencies contain no distinguishing characteristics that could be used to identify the agency from which the form came, all agency forms shall be ordered through the state registrar of voters. The registrar shall negotiate a contract for the procurement of the forms in accordance with all procurement laws and rules.

**821—2.6(48A) Production of forms.** Any person or organization, except voter registration agencies, may cause the printing and production of the mail-in voter registration application. Applications so produced shall be identical in size, shape, weight and similar in color of paper, type size, and color of ink to those available from the registrar, except that the independently produced applications may not contain an agency type code, may be preaddressed to a particular county commissioner on the reverse of the form, and may contain postage.

**821—2.7(48A) Availability of forms.** Mail-in registration applications shall be available for purchase, at the cost of production, from the state registrar of voters. Application forms for an individual's personal use shall be available free of charge at the office of the registrar, all voter registration agencies, and the office of driver services, department of transportation.

**821—2.8(48A) Incomplete applications.**

**2.8(1)** No commissioner shall refuse to register or accept an application from an applicant unable to specify the correct ward, precinct, or school district for the applicant's address. The commissioner shall make a determination of the correct political subdivisions from maps, legal descriptions, and other means at the commissioner's disposal.

**2.8(2)** A voter registration application that lacks either the applicant's Iowa driver's license number, Iowa department of transportation-issued nonoperator's identification card number, or the last four digits of the applicant's social security number shall be entered as a pending registration until the next federal election. Within seven days after receipt of the application, the commissioner shall contact the applicant by mail and request the missing required information. The applicant may provide the required information in writing until the date registration closes for the next federal election by appearing in person at the commissioner's office to complete a new application, by mailing a new and complete application, or by sending a letter to the commissioner. If the applicant reports that the applicant has not been issued either an Iowa driver's license, Iowa department of transportation-issued nonoperator's identification card number, or a social security number, the commissioner shall assign a unique identifying number that shall serve to identify the registrant for voter registration purposes and enter the registration as active.

**2.8(3)** A person who submits an application by mail and does not mark either “yes” or “no” to the question “Are you a citizen of the United States of America?” shall not be registered to vote in federal elections until the application form is completed. The registration shall be coded to be valid only for elections for which no candidate for federal office appears on the ballot. Within seven days after receipt of the application, the commissioner shall contact the applicant by mail and request the missing required information. The applicant may provide the required information in writing until the date registration closes for the next federal election by appearing in person at the commissioner’s office to complete a new application, by mailing a new and complete application, or by sending a letter to the commissioner confirming that the applicant is a U.S. citizen.

**821—2.9(48A) Optional data not required.** No commissioner shall refuse to register or accept an application from an applicant who fails or declines to reveal the applicant’s social security number, telephone number or political party affiliation.

**821—2.10(48A) Alternate (nonmailable) registration forms.** An alternate registration form is authorized for the use of voter registration agencies and nongovernmental organizations engaging in registration programs and registration drives. The form shall contain spaces for all of the required and optional information solicited by the standard form, a list of the qualifications to register to vote, a statement to be signed by the applicant that the applicant is eligible to register to vote, and a statement of the penalty for submission of a false voter registration form. The form shall be the same size as the mail-in form available from the registrar. The face of the form shall contain spaces for all the personal information asked of the applicant, along with the attestation and warning. The reverse of the form may contain the list of qualifications, and may contain space for the county commissioner’s notations. The form may be printed as a detachable part of a larger piece, or may be printed by itself. Because registration forms are frequently kept for many years, registration forms shall be printed on paper at least as thick as 20-pound xerographic paper.

The intent of this rule is to make available a mechanism for individuals, groups and organizations to conduct registration drives without requiring them to purchase the relatively expensive mail-in registration forms. To that end, the state registrar shall make available, without charge, a limited quantity of forms as determined by the voter registration commission, and camera-ready copies of a form meeting the requirements of this rule.

**821—2.11(48A) Registration forms in languages other than English.** Notwithstanding any other provision of these rules, any county commissioner may cause production of any approved voter registration application in a language other than English if the commissioner determines that such a form would be of value in the commissioner’s county. The registrar shall assist any county commissioner with the translation of voter registration forms upon the request of the county commissioner.

**821—2.12(48A) Date of registration.** For the purposes of record keeping and determining timeliness of an application to register to vote, the date of registration of an application received from a source other than the United States Postal Service is the date the application is received by the commissioner, or submitted to a voter registration agency, or submitted to the office of driver services, department of transportation, whichever is earlier. The date of registration of an application delivered to the commissioner by the United States Postal Service is the postage cancellation date on the application or on the envelope containing the application. If the postage cancellation date is missing or illegible, the registration date is the date of the second day preceding the application’s receipt in the commissioner’s office.

**821—2.13(48A) Effective date of registration.** Effective dates of registration shall be determined as follows.

**2.13(1)** If the applicant is at least 18 years of age and registration in the applicant's precinct is not closed due to a pending election, the effective date of registration is the date of registration.

**2.13(2)** If the applicant is at least 18 years of age and registration is closed in the applicant's precinct due to a pending election, the effective date of registration is the date of the day after the pending election.

**2.13(3)** If the applicant is less than 18 years of age and registration is not closed in the applicant's precinct due to a pending election, the effective date of registration is the date of the applicant's eighteenth birthday.

**2.13(4)** If the applicant is less than 18 years of age and registration is closed in the applicant's precinct due to a pending election, the effective date of registration is the date of the day after the pending election, or of the applicant's eighteenth birthday, whichever is later.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code chapter 48A.

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